

5
No. 1373
12p
AUS. N.Z. 40c

Commando

WAR STORIES IN PICTURES



The CHAMPIONS



Stars of Speedway—Neil Collins

THE CHAMPIONS

MAJOR CHARLES CAMPION.



PRIVATE " GABBY " GILLESPIE.



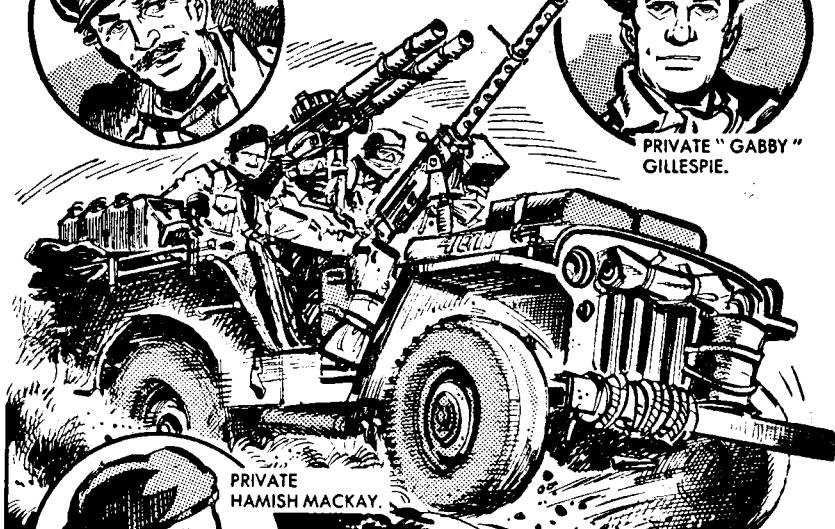
PRIVATE HAMISH MACKAY.



PRIVATE " WEEPY " WILLOW.



MAJOR CHARLES CAMPION
COMMANDED A DESERT
RAIDING FORCE, A PRIVATE
ARMY WITH SOME VERY
BIZARRE CHARACTERS. BUT
ONE THING ABOUT THEM . . .
ESPECIALLY THE MEN WHO
CREWED THE MAJOR'S OWN
JEEP . . . THEY WERE ALL
PROUD TO BE " CAMPION'S
CHAMPIONS " AND WOULD
OBEY HIS EVERY ORDER!



ACROSS THE DESERT WASTES THEY ROAMED, CREATING HAVOC AMONG GERMAN AND ITALIAN CONVOYS WITH THEIR QUICK AND INCISIVE ATTACKS.



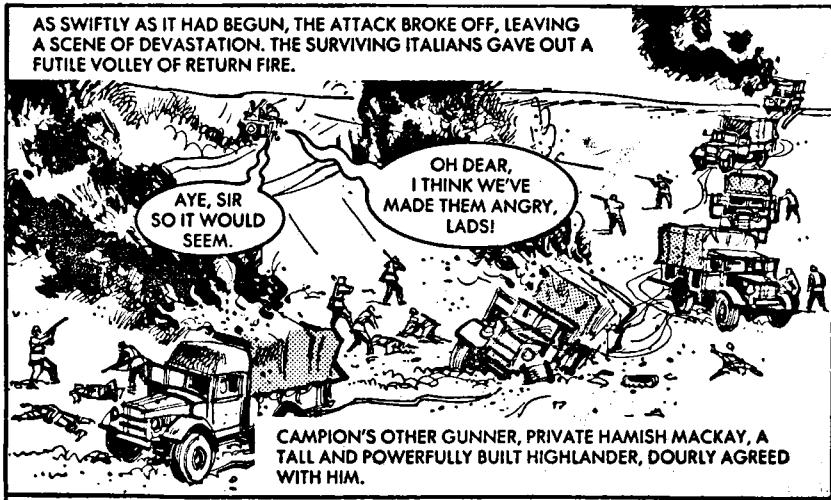
AND PRIVATE " GABBY " GILLESPIE, A ROUGH, TOUGH AUSTRALIAN WAS RIGHT. HIS TWIN LEWIS GUNS FIRED HOT LEAD INTO ONE OF THE ITALIAN TRUCKS WHICH EXPLODED VIOLENTLY AS ITS FUEL TANK BLEW UP.



THE SCARED AND CONFUSED TROOPS JUMPED OUT TO OFFER RESISTANCE, BUT WERE IMMEDIATELY CUT DOWN BY A HAIL OF BULLETS FROM THE HEAVILY-ARMED JEEP.

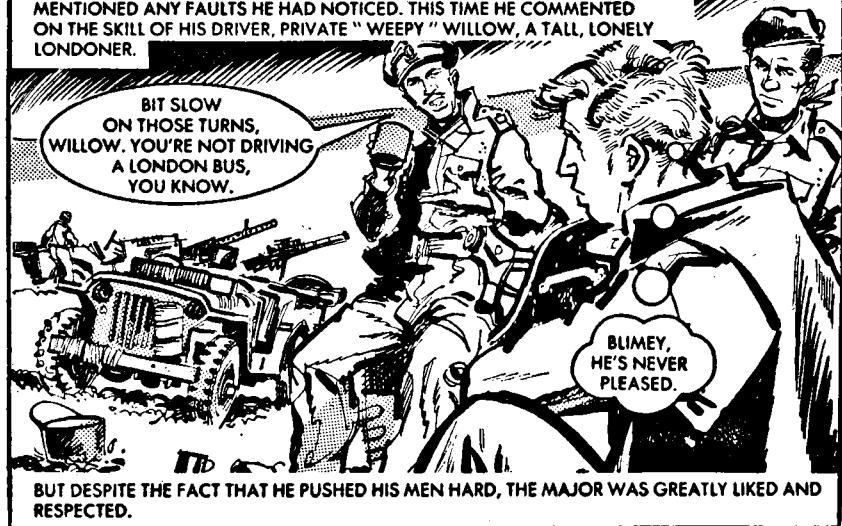


AS SWIFTLY AS IT HAD BEGUN, THE ATTACK BROKE OFF, LEAVING A SCENE OF DEVASTATION. THE SURVIVING ITALIANS GAVE OUT A FUTILE VOLLEY OF RETURN FIRE.



CAMPION'S OTHER GUNNER, PRIVATE HAMISH MACKAY, A TALL AND POWERFULLY BUILT HIGHLANDER, DOURLY AGREED WITH HIM.

A SHORT WHILE LATER CAMPION AND HIS TEAM STOPPED FOR A WELL-EARNED REST AND A BREW-UP. AS USUAL, HE GOOD-NATUREDLY MENTIONED ANY FAULTS HE HAD NOTICED. THIS TIME HE COMMENTED ON THE SKILL OF HIS DRIVER, PRIVATE "WEEPY" WILLOW, A TALL, LONELY LONDONER.



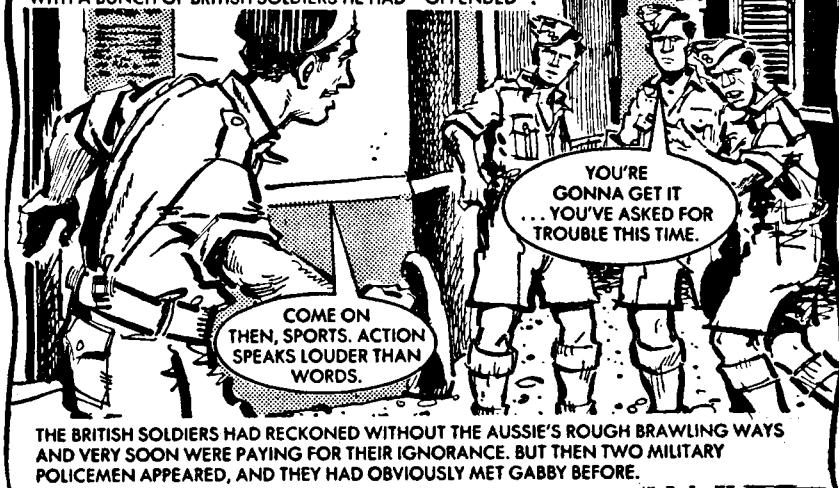
AND NOTHING SUITED WEEPY BETTER THAN A GOOD MOAN. IT GAVE THE OTHERS A CHANCE FOR A LAUGH TOO—



GABBY SMILED AND THOUGHT BACK TO WHEN HE HAD FIRST MET MAJOR CAMPION.



THE OTHERS HAD HEARD IT ALL BEFORE, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP GABBY RECOUNTING HOW HE'D FIRST COME INTO CONTACT WITH CAMPION... ON A NIGHT IN CAIRO WHEN HE'D FOUND HIMSELF IN BOOTHER AS USUAL, THIS TIME WITH A BUNCH OF BRITISH SOLDIERS HE HAD "OFFENDED".



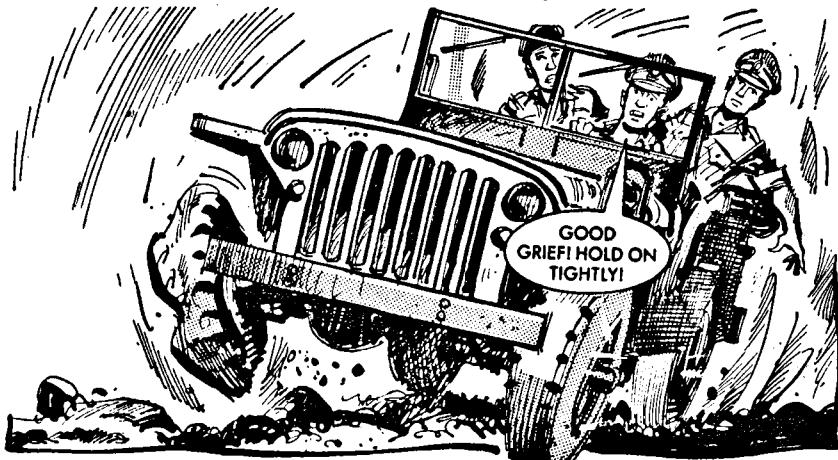
THE BRITISH SOLDIERS HAD RECKONED WITHOUT THE AUSSIE'S ROUGH BRAWLING WAYS AND VERY SOON WERE PAYING FOR THEIR IGNORANCE. BUT THEN TWO MILITARY POLICEMEN APPEARED, AND THEY HAD OBVIOUSLY MET GABBY BEFORE.



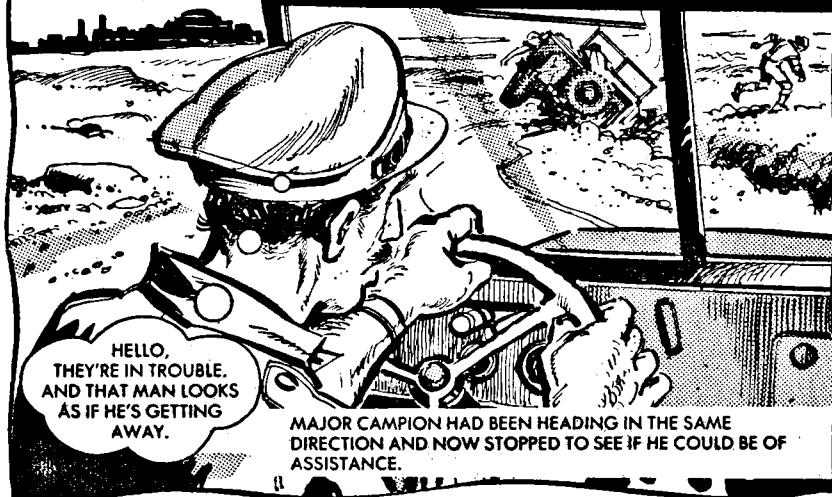
... AND WHEN HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS HE WAS BEING DRIVEN TO THE NEAREST GUARDHOUSE UNDER CLOSE WATCH.



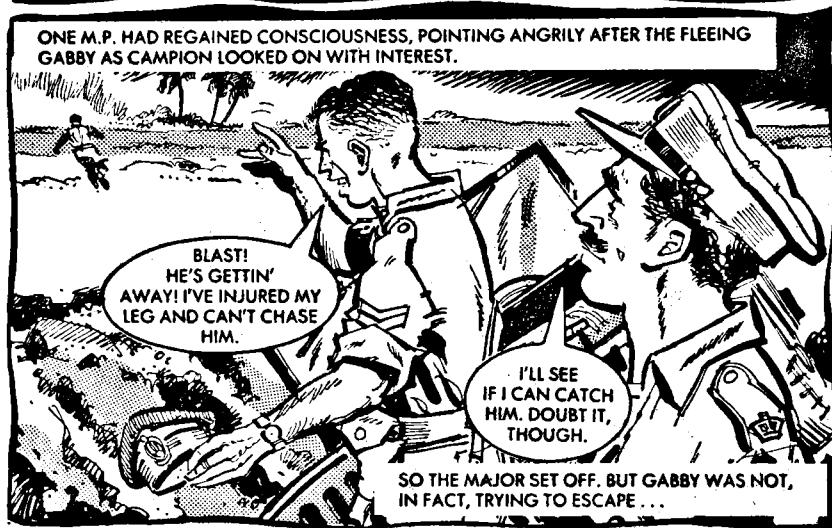
SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING, THE JEEP LURCHED TO ONE SIDE AS A FRONT TYRE BLEW. THE THREE STARTLED OCCUPANTS WERE GIVEN A SEVERE JOLT.



THE DRIVER WRESTLED FURIOUSLY WITH THE WHEEL, BUT FINALLY LOST CONTROL AND THE JEEP VEERED INTO A DITCH BY THE SIDE OF THE ROUGH TRACK. GABBY WAS QUICKLY OUT AND RUNNING—



ONE M.P. HAD REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, POINTING ANGRILY AFTER THE FLEEING GABBY AS CAMPION LOOKED ON WITH INTEREST.



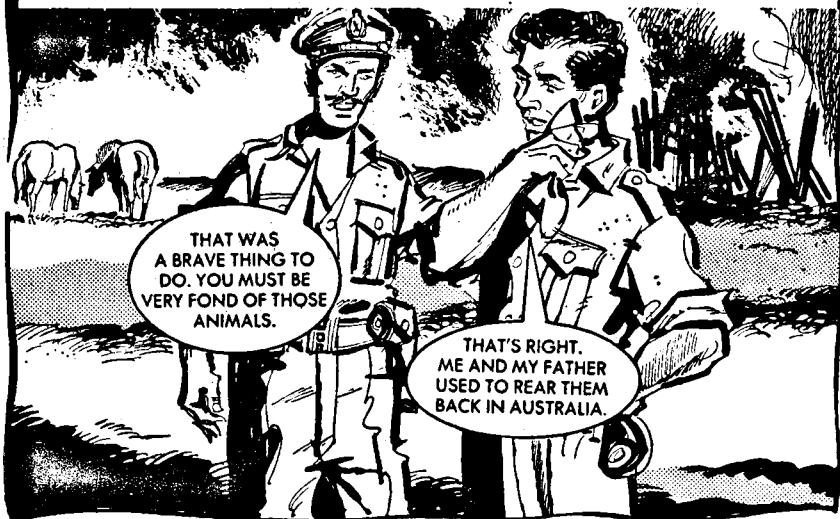
... HE HAD NOTICED A PLUME OF SMOKE AS A FIRE BROKE OUT IN BUILDINGS CLOSE TO THE ROAD AND WHEN HE RAN TO INVESTIGATE, THE SOUND OF FRIGHTENED HORSES HAD CARRIED TO HIS EARS, MAKING HIM RUN ALL THE HARDER.



SECONDS LATER GABBY BURST OUT FROM THE BLINDING, CHOKING SMOKE AND FLAMES, EXPERTLY GUIDING THE FIRST OF THE TERRIFIED ANIMALS. CAMPION STOOD BY, STARTLED BY THIS ACT OF RECKLESSNESS.



WITH BOTH HORSES SAFE, GABBY TOOK A BREATHER. THE MAJOR WALKED OVER TO SPEAK TO HIM, HIS VOICE FULL OF ADMIRATION FOR THE YOUNG AUSSIE.



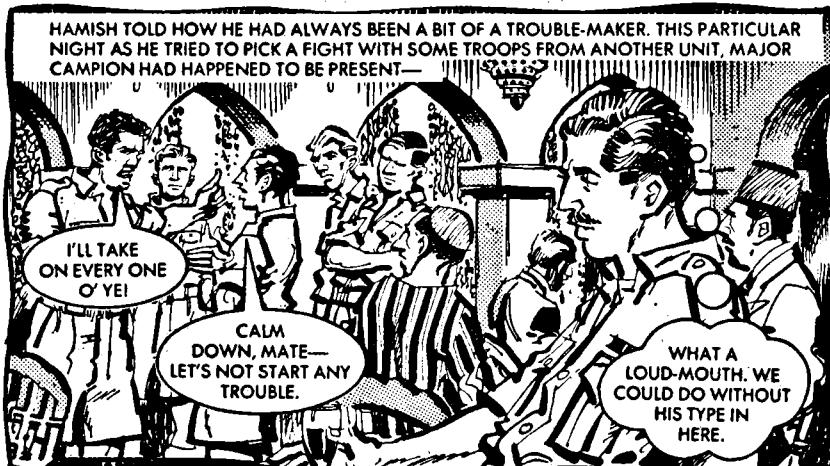
DECIDING THAT GABBY DESERVED BETTER THAN A PRISON CELL, CAMPION USED HIS INFLUENCE TO GET HIM A FULL PARDON SO THAT THE AUSSIE COULD JOIN HIS OWN UNIT. AND THE NEXT DAY—



THERE GABBY FINISHED HIS STORY, AND THEN SMILED AT HIS AUDIENCE.



THE BIG, DOUR SCOTSMAN FROWNED, THEN BEGAN HIS TALE WITH A GRIM LOOK ON HIS FACE.



BUT MOMENTS LATER THE SCOTSMAN'S TEMPER FLARED AND HE LASHED OUT AT ONE UNFORTUNATE SOLDIER. CAMPION STOOD BY, WATCHING IN DISGUST.



QUITE COOLLY THE MAJOR WALKED OVER AND TAPPED HAMISH ON THE SHOULDER, MUCH TO THE BIG MAN'S INDIGNANCE.



MAJOR CAMPION THEN PROMPTLY TURNED ON HIS HEEL AND WALKED TO THE DOOR, LOOKING BACK AT HAMISH WHO STOOD, ARMS AKIMBO, BOTH ANGRY AND AMAZED.



BUT THE BIG SCOTSMAN WAS IN FOR A FEW RATHER UNPLEASANT SURPRISES, FOR WHEN HE CHARGED AT CAMPION IN THE ALLEYWAY HE FOUND HIMSELF THROWN ROUGHLY ON TO A PILE OF RUBBISH, MUCH TO THE AMAZEMENT OF A COUPLE OF ONLOOKERS.

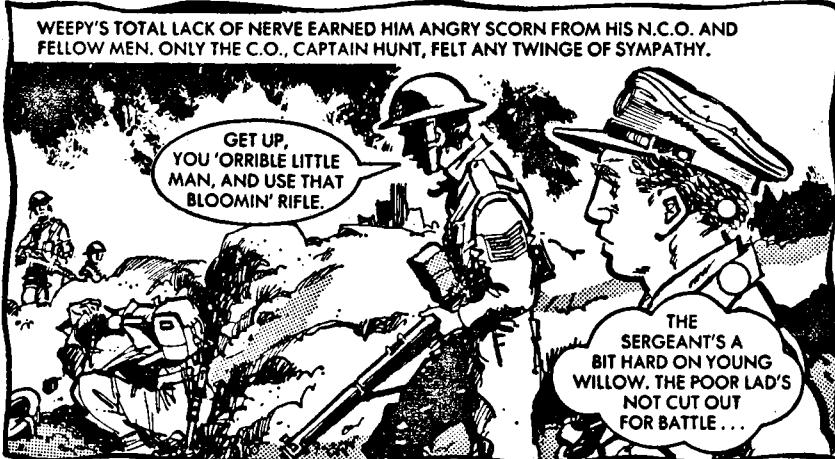




THEN WEEPY HAD BEEN IN THE FRONT-LINE AGAINST ROMMEL'S STRONG GERMAN FORCE. THE POOR PRIVATE WAS UTTERLY TERRIFIED AND AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY CROUCHED BEHIND ANY COVER AVAILABLE, COVERING IN FEAR.



WEEPY'S TOTAL LACK OF NERVE EARNED HIM ANGRY SCORN FROM HIS N.C.O. AND FELLOW MEN. ONLY THE C.O., CAPTAIN HUNT, FELT ANY TWINGE OF SYMPATHY.



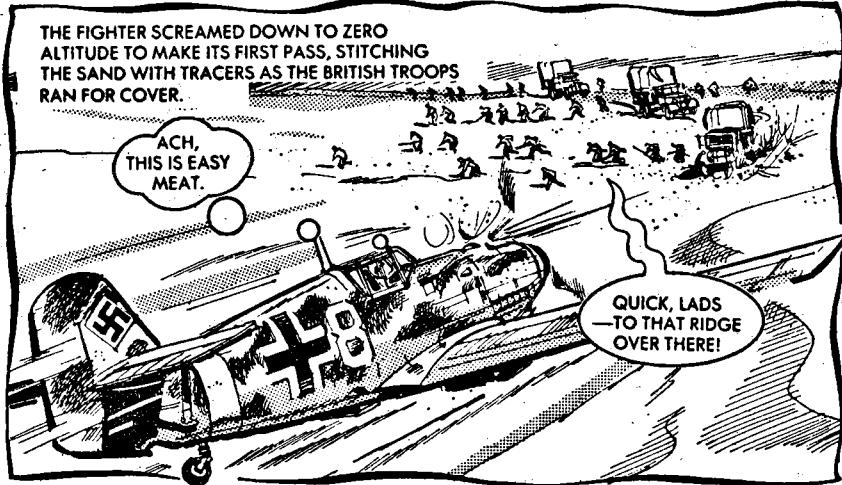
AND THE SERGEANT'S TONGUE-LASHING
WAS VERY MUCH ON WEEPY'S MIND AS THEY
MOVED BACK TO THE REAR LINES.



BUT HIGH ABOVE IN THE SKIES AT THAT
MOMENT, A PROWLING GERMAN Me 109
FIGHTER PILOT SPOTTED THE BRITISH
TRUCKS BELOW.



THE FIGHTER SCREAMED DOWN TO ZERO
ALTITUDE TO MAKE ITS FIRST PASS, STITCHING
THE SAND WITH TRACERS AS THE BRITISH TROOPS
RAN FOR COVER.



THE EXPERIENCED GERMAN PILOT HAD SCORED A HIT ON THE LEADING TRUCK AND IT RAPIDLY CAUGHT FIRE, BUT AS WEEPY RAN TO COVER HE TURNED ROUND TO SEE THE SERGEANT, UNCONSCIOUS IN THE CAB WITH FLAMES LICKING AROUND HIM.



... BEFORE DASHING OVER TO TRY AND PULL THE SERGEANT FROM THE BLAZE,
SHOWING COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR HIS OWN SAFETY.



BUT FINALLY WEEPY SUCCEEDED IN DRAGGING THE UNCONSCIOUS MAN FROM THE TEETH OF THE BLAZE, AND HE STAGGERED CLEAR, STRAINING UNDER THE WEIGHT AS OTHERS RUSHED TO HIS AID:



THEY MADE IT—ONLY JUST. THE CAPTAIN LOOKED AT WEEPY WITH ADMIRATION AS HE SAT, HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS, UNABLE TO BELIEVE WHAT HE HAD JUST DONE.



TWO WEEKS LATER, AT A PARTY GIVEN IN HONOUR OF A POPULAR OFFICER WHO WAS RETIRING, CAPTAIN HUNT MET MAJOR CAMPION AND RETOLD THE INCIDENT INVOLVING WEEPY. CAMPION WAS A VERY INTERESTED LISTENER—



AN INSTINCTIVE FEELING HAD TOLD CAMPION THAT THIS WAS THE MAN FOR HIM, AND SOON ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR WEEPY TO JOIN HIS UNIT.



AND SO, ONE WEEK LATER, CAMPION'S HAND-PICKED TEAM WENT INTO ACTION TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME. IT WAS A RATHER TENSE AND NERVOUS TIME FOR ALL, BUT NONE MORE SO THAN WEEPY WHEN THEY ENCOUNTERED OPPONENTIAL.

BUT THE PRIVATE WAS FRANKLY PUZZLED AS TO WHY HE HAD BEEN CHOSEN FOR THIS SPECIALIST FIGHTING GROUP.



WHEN THE MAJOR'S JEEP AND THE OTHERS IN HIS FORCE SPREAD OUT TO ATTACK THE UNSUSPECTING ENEMY, WEEPY TOTALLY LOST HIS NERVE, BUT CAMPION POINTED HIS GUN THREATENINGLY AT HIM AND SPOKE HARSHLY.

I'M GETTING OUT... I CAN'T FACE IT!

MAKE ONE MOVE AND YOU'LL GET A ROW OF BULLETS THROUGH YOU—UNDERSTAND?

WEEPY NODDED—HE UNDERSTOOD ALL RIGHT. HE TOOK UP POSITION AND PREPARED HIMSELF FOR THE COMING FIGHT.

THE FIERCE BATTLE WITH THE ARMOURED CARS LASTED SEVERAL MINUTES BEFORE BOTH WERE DESTROYED. AFTERWARDS CAMPION HALTED THE JEEP AND TOOK WEEPY ASIDE TO GIVE HIM A SEVERE REPRIMAND. GABBY AND HAMISH STOOD BY THE JEEP WAITING—

OCH, THE WEE MAN LOOKS LIKE HE'S GETTING AN AWFUL TELLING OFF.

I HOPE IT DOES HIM SOME GOOD ...

HOWEVER, IT SEEMED THAT THE MAJOR'S LECTURE HAD ITS DESIRED EFFECT ...

... FOR DURING THE NEXT WEEKS WEEPY PROVED HIMSELF AN EXCELLENT TEAM-MAN, FITTING IN PERFECTLY WITH THE OTHERS, AND ALSO EARNING HIS NICK-NAME FOR BEING SUCH A PESSIMIST.

NOT BAD
FOR A DAY'S WORK,
EH, LADS?

DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'D DO WITHOUT
US, SIR!

AND THERE WEEPY'S THOUGHTS ENDED AS CAMPION ORDERED THEM BACK IN THE JEEP TO HEAD FOR THEIR RENDEZVOUS POINT WITH THE OTHER JEEPS FROM THE MAJOR'S UNIT.

ONCE THE RENDEZVOUS WAS MADE CAMPION AND HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND, LIEUTENANT SNELL, DISCUSSED THE ORDERS THEY HAD JUST RECEIVED ON THE WIRELESS SET FROM H.Q.

H.Q. WANT
US TO RECCE
THE AREA NORTH OF
HERE. THEY'VE JUST HAD NEWS
THAT A GERMAN
ARMOURED UNIT'S
THERE.

COULD BE
DICEY, SIR. THAT
AREA'S FULL OF
ARAB TRIBES.

THE MAJOR QUICKLY MADE A DECISION, AND LEAPING INTO THE JEEP, HE EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD RECCE THE AREA ALONE, SO AS NOT TO RISK LIVES UNNECESSARILY. HE ISSUED FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO LIEUTENANT SNELL AS HIS CREW LOOKED ON, DISMAYED AT NOT ACCOMPANYING HIM.



SLOWLY THE TIME PASSED AND THE MEN BECAME VERY WORRIED WHEN THE DEADLINE APPROACHED AND THERE WAS STILL NO SIGN OF MAJOR CAMPION.



LIEUTENANT SNELL HELD OFF AS LONG AS HE POSSIBLY COULD BEFORE GIVING THE ORDER TO PREPARE TO MOVE OUT.

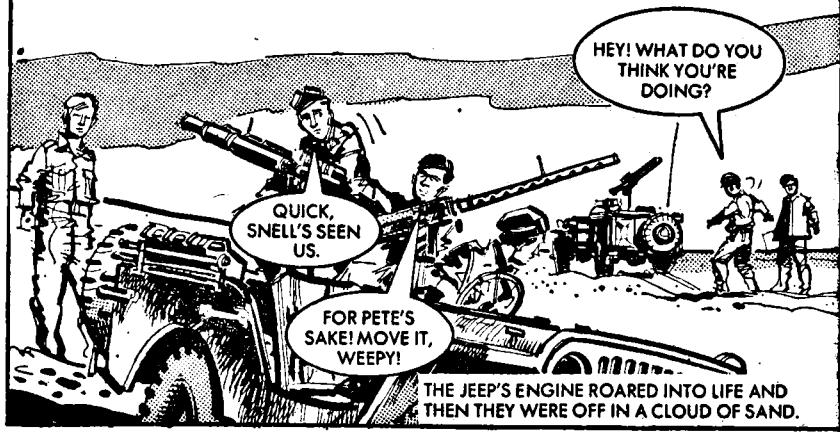


BUT THE MAJOR'S CREWMEN WOULD NEVER THINK OF LEAVING WITHOUT HIM, AND WHEN THEY WERE ALONE HAMISH SPOKE FOR ALL OF THEM—



LOOKING AROUND THEM, THE THREE SAW THAT LIEUTENANT SNELL AND HIS SERGEANT WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS. THEY KNEW THERE WOULD NEVER BE A BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING AWAY.

QUICKLY GABBY JUMPED INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT OF THE NEAREST JEEP WHILE WEEPY AND HAMISH CLAMBERED INTO THE BACK. BUT THEY HAD BEEN SPOTTED—



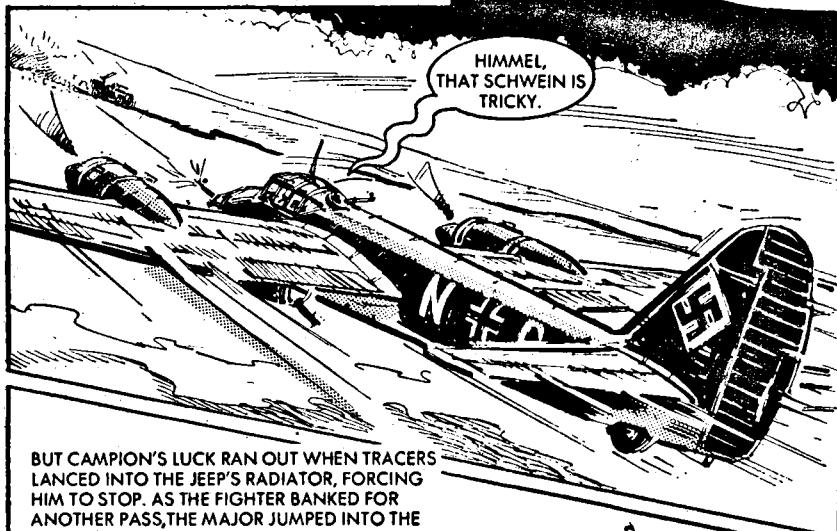
LIEUTENANT SNELL MERELY SIGHED AS HE WATCHED THEM SET OFF IN SEARCH OF MAJOR CAMPION. NOW HE AND THE FIVE OTHER MEN WOULD HAVE TO RETURN TO BASE IN THE ONE REMAINING JEEP.



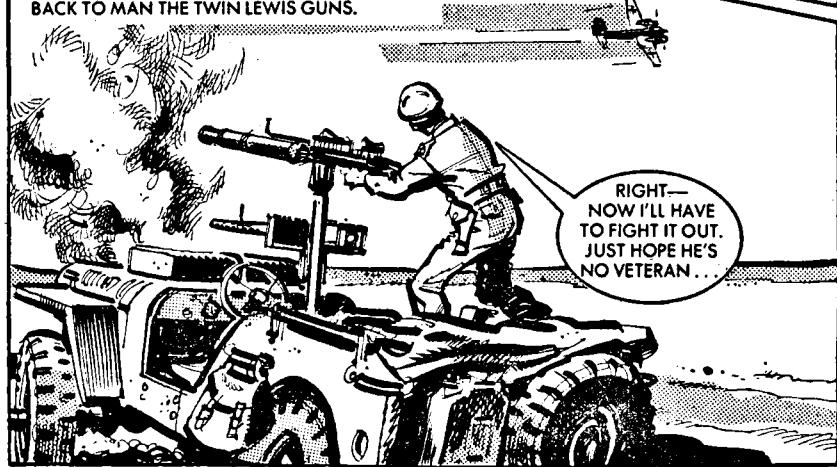
AT THAT MOMENT, ALMOST FIFTY MILES AWAY, THE MAJOR HAD STILL NOT FOUND ANY SIGN OF GERMAN ACTIVITY AND DECIDED TO CARRY ON. BUT NOW HE WAS ABOUT TO ENCOUNTER HIS FIRST SPOT OF TROUBLE, IN THE SHAPE OF AN APPROACHING JUNKERS 88.



DESPERATELY HE SENT THE JEEP INTO A SERIES OF TIGHT, SKIDDING TURNS AND SWERVES AS THE Ju 88 PILOT TRIED TO FASTEN ONTO HIM.



BUT CAMPION'S LUCK RAN OUT WHEN TRACERS LANDED INTO THE JEEP'S RADIATOR, FORCING HIM TO STOP. AS THE FIGHTER BANKED FOR ANOTHER PASS, THE MAJOR JUMPED INTO THE BACK TO MAN THE TWIN LEWIS GUNS.



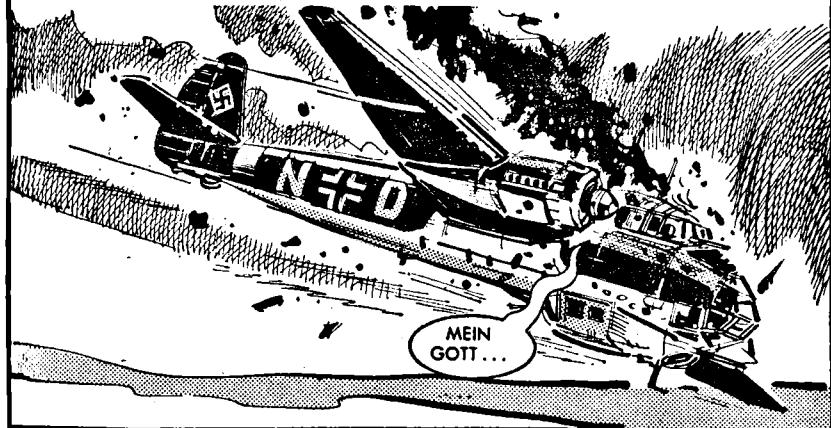
AS SOON AS THE GERMAN PLANE WAS WITHIN RANGE, THE MAJOR UNLEASHED A FURIOUS HAIL OF FIRE DIRECTLY IN ITS PATH.



CAMPION'S AIM WAS SPOT ON. THE COCKPIT WAS SHATTERED INTO A THOUSAND FRAGMENTS AND THE PILOT DIED.



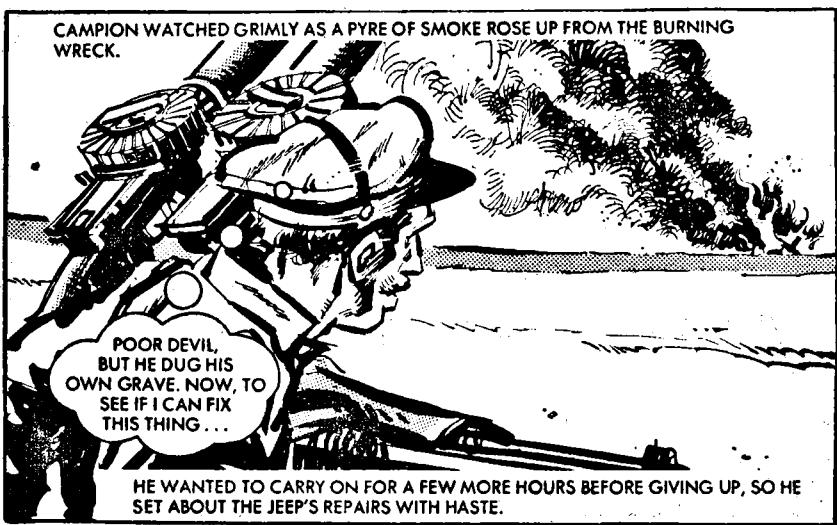
WITH ONE ENGINE ON FIRE AND STREAMING BLACK, OILY SMOKE, AND NO ONE TO STOP ITS SCREAMING DIVE, THE AIRCRAFT HAD BUT ONE FATE.



IT CRASHED INTO THE DESERT FLOOR, THE NOISE OF THE EXPLOSION CUTTING THROUGH THE STILL DESERT SILENCE.

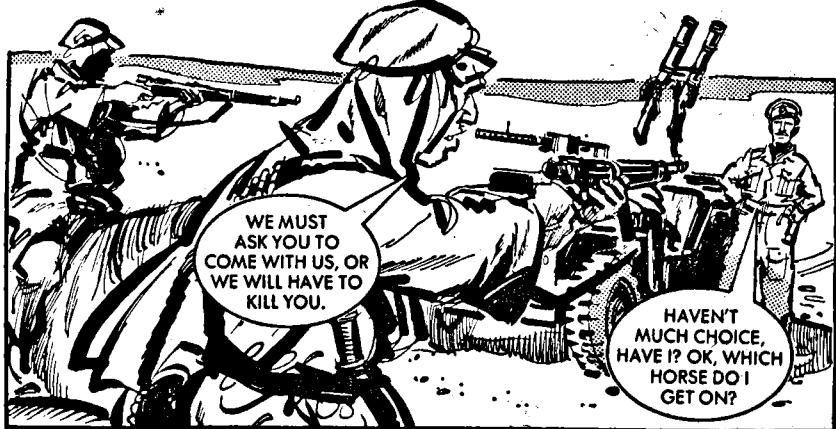


CAMPION WATCHED GRIMLY AS A PYRE OF SMOKE ROSE UP FROM THE BURNING WRECK.





THE TWO ARABS APPROACHED RATHER CAUTIOUSLY, GUNS AT THE READY—THEY WERE POLITE BUT INSISTED THAT CAMPION ACCOMPANY THEM TO MEET THEIR LEADER.



THE TWO RIDERS, WITH THEIR PRISONER, BEGAN THE JOURNEY BACK TO THEIR CAMP. CAMPION DID NOT CONSIDER HIMSELF IN ANY REAL DANGER AND ASKED ABOUT THE MAN HE WAS TO MEET.

IS THIS
MAHMOUD A FRIENDLY
SORT OF CHAP?

OUR
LEADER IS
A VERY FAIR AND
HONEST MAN.

ONE THING CAMPION DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT MAHMOUD'S EVIL BROTHER, RASHID, WAS AT THAT MOMENT ENGAGED IN A FIERY ARGUMENT. THE DESERT LEADER LISTENED CALMLY TO HIS BROTHER'S RANTINGS, ENJOYING A SMOKE FROM HIS HOOKAH.

I TELL
YOU, WE MUST
DECLARE WAR ON
THE SHEFTAN.

THE SPILLING
OF BLOOD IS NOT
THE ONLY WAY TO
SETTLE THIS. WE WILL
NEGOTIATE WITH THEIR
LEADER.

THE SHEFTAN WERE A NEIGHBOURING TRIBE, AND TROUBLE HAD ARisen BETWEEN THEM AND MAHMOUD'S PEOPLE. BUT THE PEACE-LOVING LEADER DID NOT WANT WAR, UNLIKE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WHO LONGED FOR POWER.

RASHID STORMED OUT OF HIS BROTHER'S TENT, GOING IN SEARCH OF A MAN WHO COULD HELP HIM—KARL KRUGER, A GERMAN ARMY OFFICER.



KARL HAD BEEN FOUND BY MAHMUD'S MEN A WEEK EARLIER WHEN HE WAS WANDERING ALONE, HOPELESSLY LOST. BUT, IN FACT, UNKNOWN TO THE ARABS, HE WAS A GERMAN AGENT, PLANTED IN THE DESERT FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING UNREST AMONG THE TRIBES AND CONVERTING THEM TO THE CAUSE OF THE THIRD REICH.

SO FAR KRUGER HAD DONE WELL—HE HAD BEFRIENDED RASHID WITH THE INTENT OF HELPING HIM OVERTHROW HIS BROTHER. IT NOW LOOKED AS THOUGH HE MIGHT SUCCEED.



RASHID HAD FAITH IN KRUGER'S WORDS AND WAS SOON HIS ARROGANT SELF AGAIN.



RASHID SAT ALONE UNDER THE NIGHT SKY, THINKING BACK TO THE TIMES BEFORE WHEN MEN LIKE HIM HAD LED THE TRIBE TO BATTLE, CONQUERING ALL BEFORE THEM.



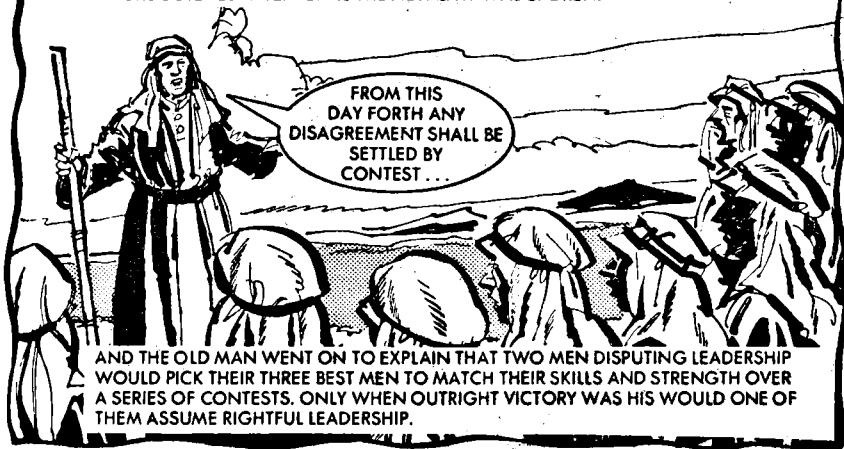
DURING THOSE YEARS THE TRIBES HAD LIVED BY THE SWORD. ANY DISAGREEMENT AND THE DESERT SANDS RAN RED WITH THE BLOOD OF MANY BRAVE ARAB WARRIORS.



BUT THE SLAUGHTER HAD TO END BEFORE THE WARRING TRIBES WIPE ONE ANOTHER OUT. THE WISEST MEN FROM EACH OF THE TRIBES GATHERED TOGETHER TO TRY AND FIND A SOLUTION.



FINALLY A DECISION WAS REACHED, AND THE GATHERED THROGHT OF DESERT WARRIORS LISTENED INTENTLY AS THE NEW LAW WAS SPOKEN.



AND IT WAS THIS CUSTOM THAT KRUGER NOW ENCOURAGED RASHID TO MAKE FULL USE OF TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE TRIBE. NEXT DAY, A SPEAR FLYING INTO THE SAND OUTSIDE MAHMUD'S TENT SIGNALLED THE CHALLENGE . . . ONE WHICH MAHMOUD COULD NOT REFUSE WITHOUT LOSING THE RESPECT OF THE TRIBE.



SOON AFTER THE CHALLENGE HAD BEEN MADE, THE TWO SCOUTS WITH MAJOR CAMPION ARRIVED AFTER THEIR LONG JOURNEY. ONE OF THE ARABS WENT TO INFORM MAHMOUD—



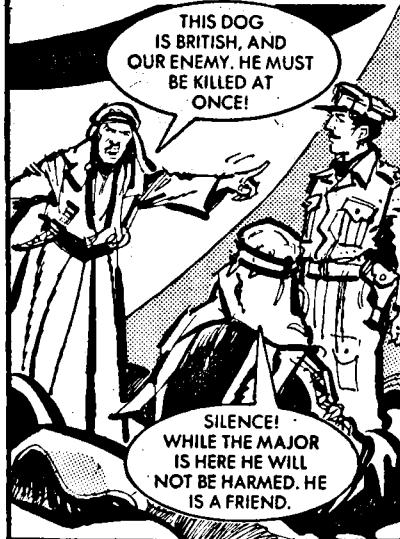
HOWEVER, WHEN RASHID NOTICED CAMPION'S PRESENCE HE SAW IT AS A THREAT AND QUICKLY INFORMED KRUGER.



MEANWHILE MAHMOUD WAS MAKING CAMPION A VERY WELCOME GUEST.



JUST THEN RASHID BURST IN AND CONFRONTED HIS BROTHER, POINTING AN ACCUSING FINGER AT THE MAJOR WHO WAS MOMENTARILY TAKEN ABACK.



RASHID SNEERED AND REMINDED HIS BROTHER OF THE CHALLENGE . . . AND WHAT MIGHT COME OF IT—



ONCE RASHID HAD LEFT, MAHMOUD INVITED THE MAJOR TO EAT WITH HIM WHILE HE EXPLAINED ABOUT KRUGER'S PRESENCE AND HIS BROTHER'S EVIL INTENTIONS AND THE COMING CONTEST.



AS THEY FINISHED THEIR MEAL KARL KRUGER ENTERED, BOWING POLITELY TO BOTH MEN, THEN INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO MAJOR CAMPION.



BOTH THEIR COUNTRIES WERE AT WAR, BUT HERE THE TWO MEN WERE ON NEUTRAL GROUND AND COULD DO NOTHING TO OFFEND THEIR HOSTS . . . AT LEAST WHILE MAHMOUD WAS IN POWER. AND BOTH WERE WARY AND SUSPICIOUS—



MAHMOUD LOOKED ON WITH DISLIKE. HE HAD NO LOVE OF THE GERMANS AND HAD GRUDGINgly GIVEN IN TO HIS BROTHER'S PLEAS BY LETTING KRUGER STAY.

THAT AFTERNOON THE WHOLE TRIBE EAGERLY AWAITED THE NEXT DAY'S CONTEST.



ONE OF MAHMOUD'S MEN, A FINE-LOOKING ATHLETE, SAT AT HIS MEAL BEFORE BEGINNING TO PRACTISE FOR HIS EVENTS.

SUDDENLY HE SQUIRMED IN PAIN AND STOOD UP, CLUTCHING HIS ACHING STOMACH.

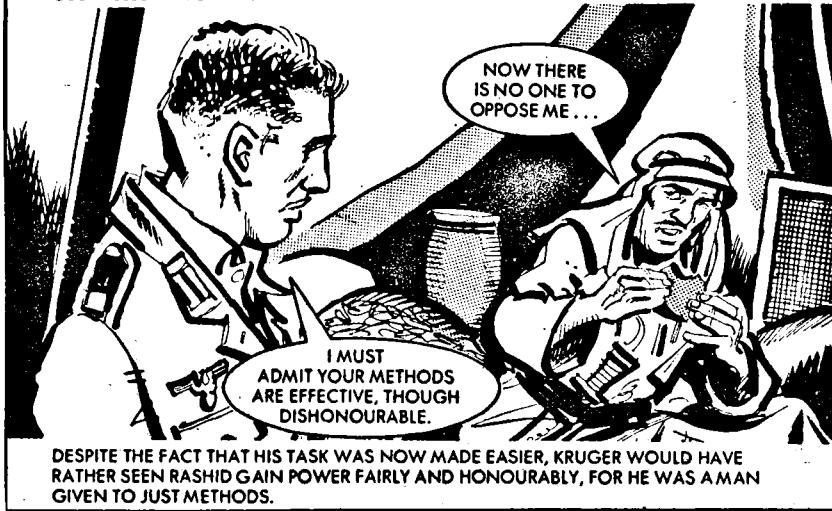


WITHIN AN HOUR HE WAS IN THE GRIP OF A TERRIBLE FEVER AND CONFINED TO HIS TENT.

THE SAME DAY MAHMOUD'S TWO OTHER MEN SUDDENLY TOOK ILL, AND WHEN THE PHYSICIAN WAS SUMMONED HE DID NOT RECOGNISE THE SYMPTOMS.

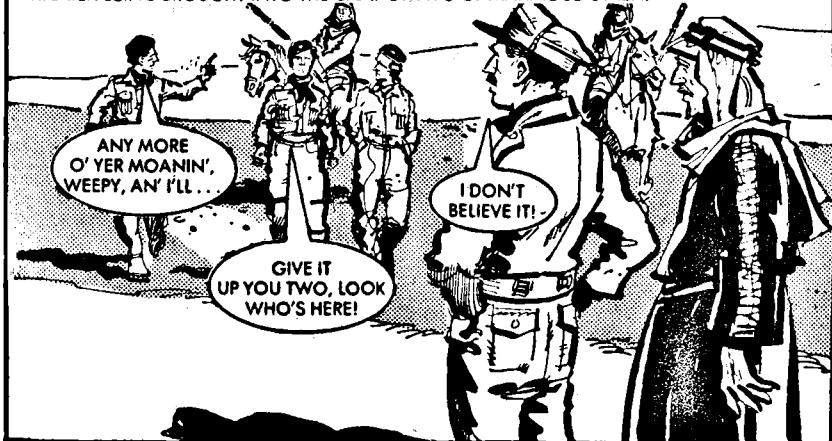


AND MAHMOUD'S SUSPICIONS WERE WELL-FOUNDED, FOR RASHID HAD INDEED POISONED HIS THREE CONTESTANTS. NOW THE POWER-CRAZED BROTHER SAW NO OBSTACLES IN HIS WAY.



DESPITE THE FACT THAT HIS TASK WAS NOW MADE EASIER, KRUGER WOULD HAVE RATHER SEEN RASHID GAIN POWER FAIRLY AND HONOURABLY, FOR HE WAS A MAN GIVEN TO JUST METHODS.

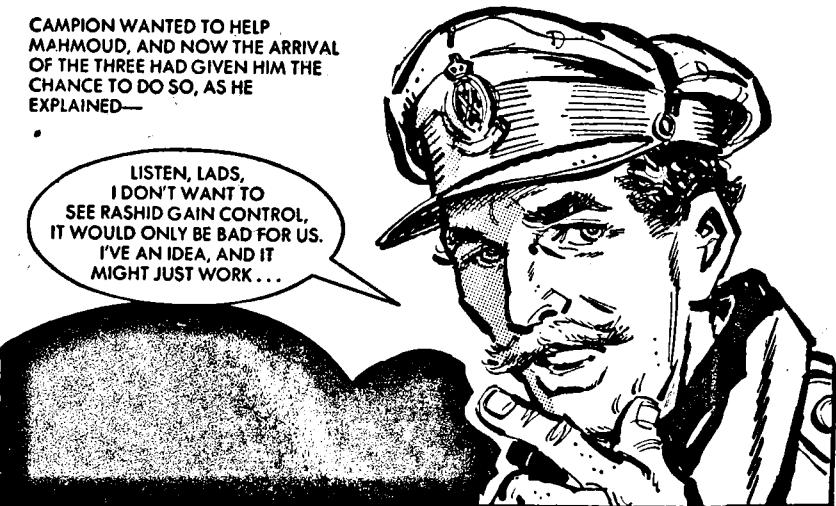
BUT AT THAT MOMENT THERE WAS A COMMOTION OUTSIDE. QUICKLY GOING WITH MAHMOUD, CAMPION WAS BOTH STARTLED AND DELIGHTED TO SEE GABBY, WEEPY AND HAMISH BEING BROUGHT INTO THE CAMP BY TWO OF MAHMOUD'S MEN.



AFTER CAMPION HAD EXPLAINED TO MAHMOUD THAT THESE WERE HIS LOYAL CREWMEN, THEY WERE GIVEN SOMETHING TO EAT. THEN GABBY TOLD HOW THEY HAD COME TO FIND THE MAJOR.



CAMPION WANTED TO HELP MAHMOUD, AND NOW THE ARRIVAL OF THE THREE HAD GIVEN HIM THE CHANCE TO DO SO, AS HE EXPLAINED—



CAMPION EXPLAINED THAT HE WANTED GABBY, WEEPY, AND HAMISH TO TAKE THE PLACE OF MAHMOUD'S CONTESTANTS.



YOU'RE ALL
FIT ENOUGH, AND STRONG
ENOUGH ...

ONLY WEEPY WAS NOT KEEN ON THE MAJOR'S PLAN, BUT HIS OBJECTION WAS VERY QUICKLY OVERRULED.



I DON'T
LIKE IT, AND
BESIDES I'M NO GOOD
AT ANYTHING ...

YOU'LL DO
IT! ANYWAY, YOU
SHOULD BE A FAST RUNNER,
YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH
PRACTISE ...

WITHOUT A MOMENT TO LOSE, CAMPION ANNOUNCED HIS SUGGESTION. THE OLD MAN WAS ONLY TOO GRATEFUL FOR THE MAJOR'S HELP.



THEY ARE
AT YOUR DISPOSAL,
MAHMOUD.

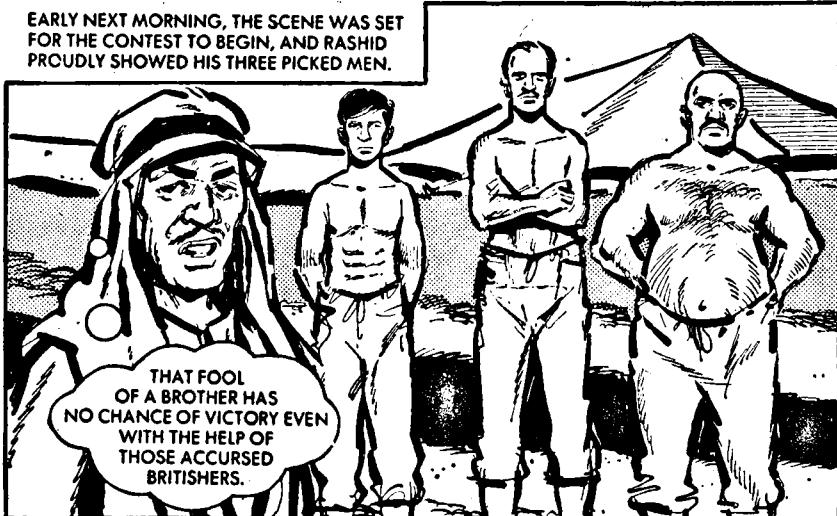
HOW CAN
I EVER THANK
YOU ENOUGH FOR
THIS, MAJOR ...

WHEN THEY WENT TO INFORM RASHID HE WAS FURIOUS, BUT HAD NO CHOICE OTHER THAN TO ACCEPT.



THE GERMAN WAS PUZZLED AND ALSO WORRIED BY THE ARRIVAL OF MORE BRITISH SOLDIERS. HE DECIDED TO TAKE A BACK SEAT FOR THE TIME BEING, AND AWAIT THE RESULT OF THE NEXT DAY'S CONTEST.

EARLY NEXT MORNING, THE SCENE WAS SET FOR THE CONTEST TO BEGIN, AND RASHID PROUDLY SHOWED HIS THREE PICKED MEN.



THE FIRST ROUND OF THE CONTEST WAS HORSEMANSHIP. MAHMOUD'S MAN WOULD HAVE TO PICK ONE HORSE FROM THE NUMBER ROUNDED UP IN THE CRUDELY-MADE CORRAL AND BREAK IT IN AS HE HAD NO HORSE OF HIS OWN.



GABBY WAS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE FOR THIS TEST, AS HE HAD ALWAYS BOASTED OF HIS HORSEMANSHIP. NOW MAHMOUD WISHED HIM GOOD LUCK BEFORE HE CHOSE HIS MOUNT.



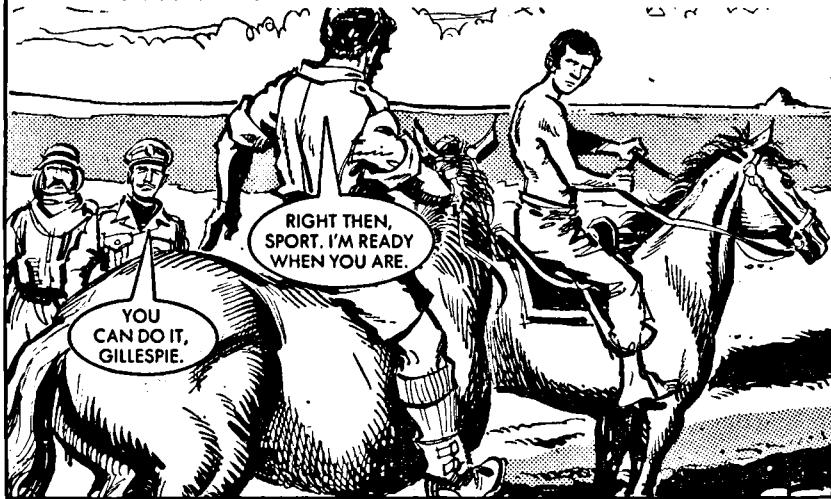
ONCE ON THE HORSE'S BACK, GABBY HELD ON GRIMLY AS THE ANIMAL BUCKED AND REARED, TRYING TO THROW HIM OFF.



EVERYONE WATCHED WITH BATED BREATH UNTIL, EXHAUSTED, GABBY FINALLY HAD THE ANIMAL UNDER CONTROL.



NOW THAT GABBY HAD HIS MOUNT HE COULD MATCH HIS ABILITY AGAINST RASHID'S HORSEMAN. FIRST THEY HAD TO RACE TO A DISTANT ROCK, GO ROUND IT, THEN RETURN TO THE START AND FINISH LINE.



THEN THEY WERE OFF, THE LITTLE ARAB QUICKLY OPENING UP A LEAD AS GABBY URGED HIS MOUNT TO GREATER SPEED.



GABBY'S HORSE RESPONDED AND BY HALF WAY THEY WERE LEVEL, THOUGH THE AUSSIE HAD THE ADVANTAGE BY TAKING AN INSIDE LINE ROUND THE ROCK WHICH MARKED THE OUTER LIMIT OF THE COURSE.



HE NEEDN'T HAVE WORRIED—FOR IN A THRILLING FINISH, HIS HORSE FOUND A LITTLE EXTRA PACE, JUST ENOUGH TO BRING THEM HOME FIRST.



SO MAHMOUD HAD WON THE FIRST PART OF THE CONTEST, BUT RASHID WAS NOT UNDULY WORRIED. HE WAS STILL CONFIDENT OF VICTORY, UNLIKE KRUGER, WHO SUSPECTED THE BRITISH WERE UP TO SOMETHING.

LET THEM
CELEBRATE THEIR WIN,
FOR IT WILL BE
THEIR ONLY ONE.

I'M SURE
THE ENGLANDERS CAME
HERE TO HELP
MAHMOUD ...

THE GERMAN'S THOUGHTS WERE
INTERRUPTED AS THE NEXT TRIAL OF
SKILL WAS ANNOUNCED.

THIS TIME GABBY FACED THE LITTLE ARAB IN A KIND OF MEDIAEVAL JOUST. BOTH
WERE MOUNTED AND ARMED WITH LONG POLES TIED WITH SACKING AT ONE END.

CRIKEY,
WHO THOUGHT UP
THESE CONTESTS? MUSTA
BIN OFF THEIR
FLAMIN' ROCKER.

GABBY STARTED HIS CHARGE, GALLOPING HARD AT HIS OPPONENT.

THEN WHEN THEY WERE ALMOST LEVEL,
HE LUNGED OUT, STRIKING THE ARAB
HARD IN THE CHEST, KNOCKING HIM
FROM HIS HORSE.



RASHID WATCHED, HIS EYES FULL OF ANGER. NO LONGER WAS HE SO CONFIDENT.



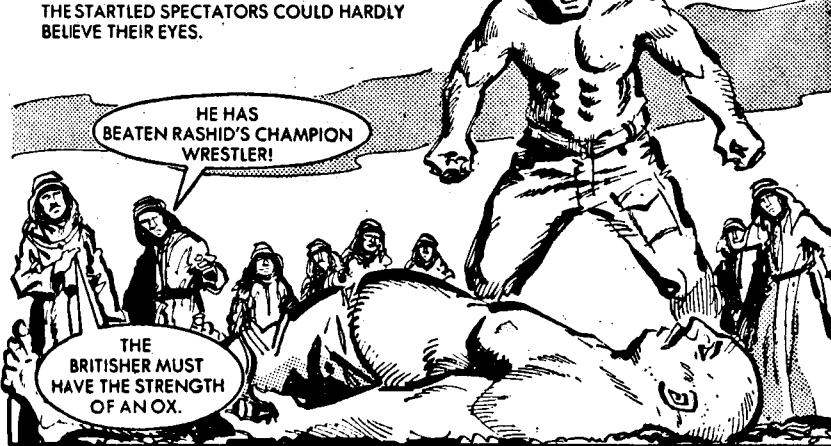
NOW IT WAS HAMISH'S TURN TO PROVE HIS STRENGTH AGAINST A VERY LARGE OPPONENT. THE BIG SCOTSMAN HAD NO FEARS, HOWEVER—



THEY GRAPPLED FOR SEVERAL MINUTES UNTIL HAMISH TOOK HIS OPPORTUNITY AND EXPERTLY THREW THE OVERWEIGHT ARAB.



THAT ONE THROW WAS ENOUGH--THE SCOTSMAN'S OPPONENT WENT OUT LIKE A LIGHT AS HE HIT THE GROUND. ALL AROUND THE STARTLED SPECTATORS COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THEIR EYES.

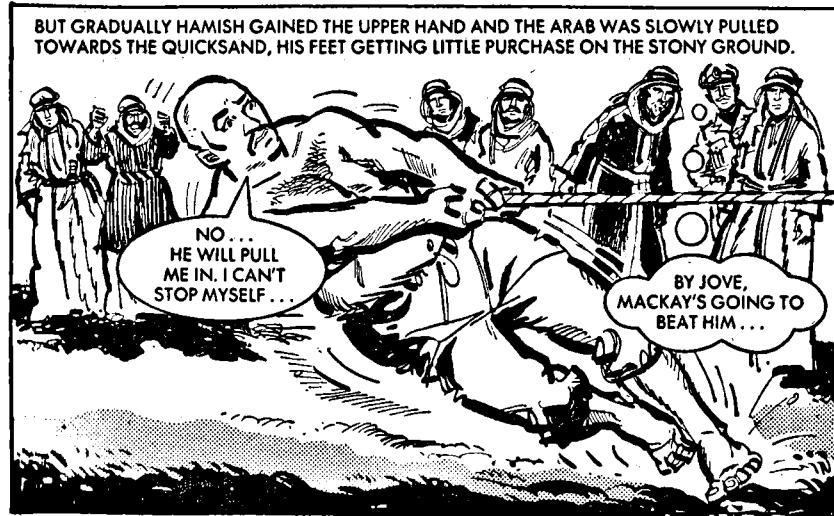
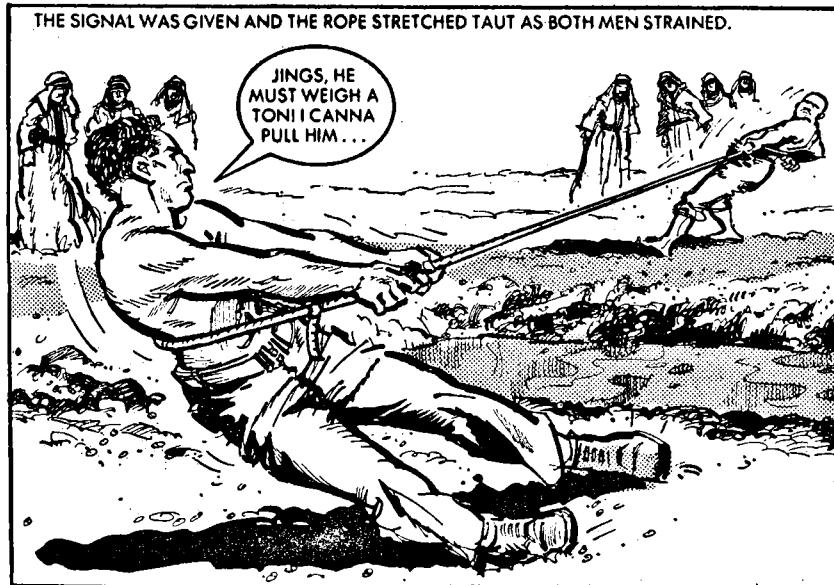


THE NEXT EVENT WAS A TUG-OF-WAR WITH A DIFFERENCE—THE DIFFERENCE BEING THAT BETWEEN THE OPPONENTS WAS AN AREA OF DEADLY QUICKSAND, READY TO SWALLOW ONE OF THEM INTO ITS DEPTHS.

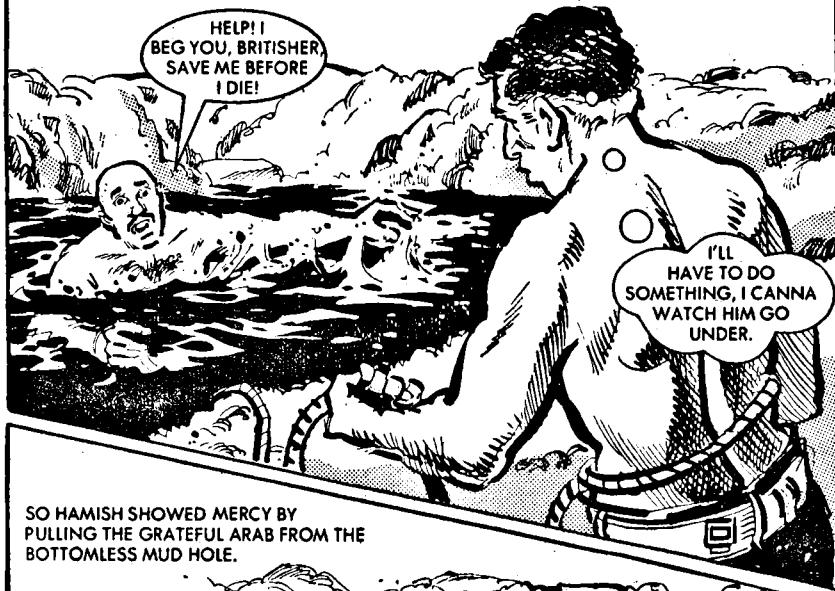


WATCHING GRIMLY WERE CAMPION AND MAHMOUD. BOTH KNEW THIS WOULD BE A TEST OF SHEER STRENGTH . . . AND THE ARAB SEEMED TO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE.





SURE ENOUGH, RASHID'S MAN WAS SLOWLY DRAGGED INTO THE QUICKSAND WHICH BEGAN TO SUCK HIM UNDER AS HE STRUGGLED DESPERATELY.



SO HAMISH SHOWED MERCY BY
PULLING THE GRATEFUL ARAB FROM THE
BOTTOMLESS MUD HOLE.



RASHID QUICKLY GOT HOLD OF THE BEATEN MAN AND GAVE VENT TO HIS FURY.



MEANWHILE HAMISH WAS BEING CONGRATULATED
ON HIS SUPREME EFFORT BY HIS TEAM-MATES.

NOW IT WAS UP TO WEEPY. IF HE DID NOT LOSE THEN MAHMOUD WOULD RETAIN LEADERSHIP. THE PRIVATE'S FIRST "EVENT" WAS A RACE ACROSS THE SAND.



BOTH MAHMOUD AND CAMPION
WATCHED ANXIOUSLY AS THE RACE
STARTED.

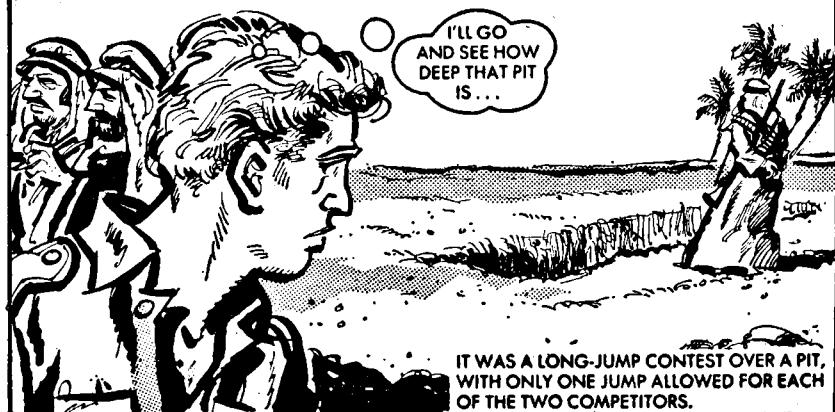
AND WEEPY DID RUN . . . AS HE HAD NEVER RUN BEFORE, FOR THEIR LIVES DEPENDED ON IT.



BUT WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE WEEPY HAD THE RACE SEWN UP, HIS OPPONENT PUT IN A MOMENTOUS CHARGE AT THE FINISH TO MAKE IT A DEAD HEAT.



SO TO THE LAST ROUND OF THE CONTEST, AND WEEPY HAD TO WIN TO ENSURE OUTRIGHT VICTORY FOR MAHMOUD.



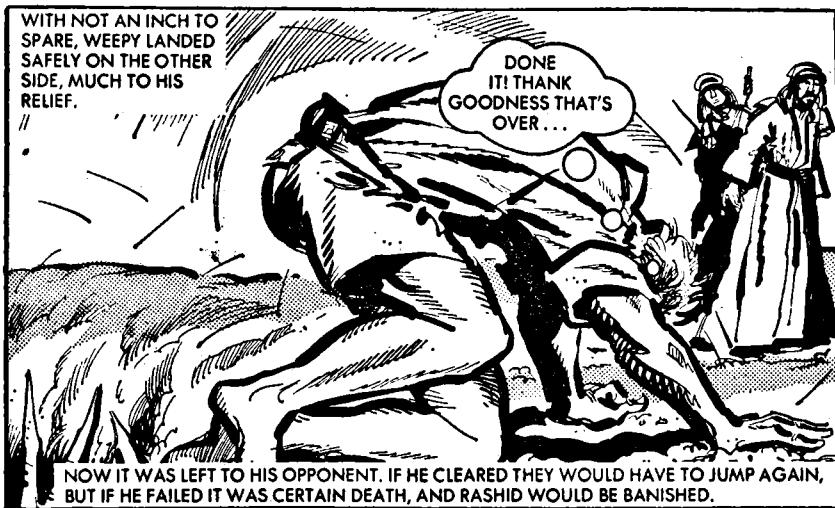
IT WAS A LONG-JUMP CONTEST OVER A PIT, WITH ONLY ONE JUMP ALLOWED FOR EACH OF THE TWO COMPETITORS.



HIS TAKE-OFF FOOT LANDED SQUARELY ON THE PIT EDGE, PROPELLING HIM THROUGH THE AIR AND OVER THE DEADLY STAKES.



WITH NOT AN INCH TO SPARE, WEEPY LANDED SAFELY ON THE OTHER SIDE, MUCH TO HIS RELIEF.



NOW IT WAS LEFT TO HIS OPPONENT. IF HE CLEARED THEY WOULD HAVE TO JUMP AGAIN, BUT IF HE FAILED IT WAS CERTAIN DEATH, AND RASHID WOULD BE BANISHED.

THE ARAB ATHLETE TOOK OFF ON HIS RUN-UP—



BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG. THE ATHLETE'S NERVES GOT THE BETTER OF HIM AND HIS LEGS SUDDENLY WENT NUMB.



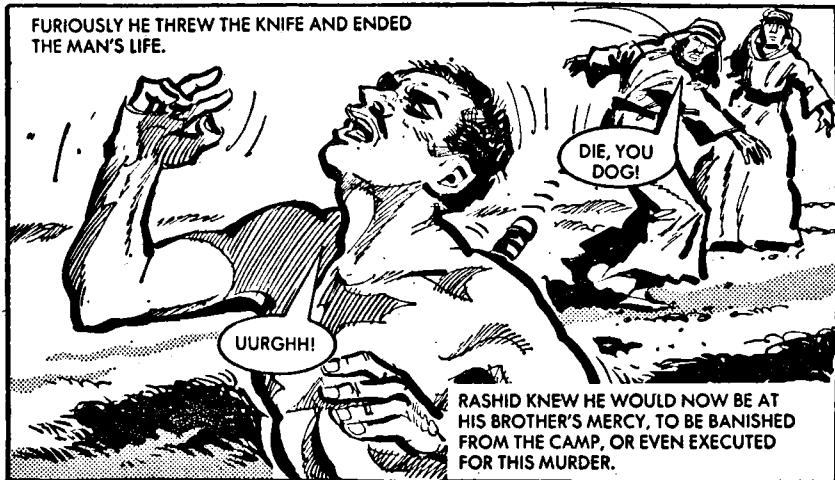
HE SLID TO A HALT AND STOOD WAVERING ON THE EDGE, STARING DOWN IN TERROR AT THE RAZOR-SHARP POINTS REACHING UP.



RASHID WASN'T JUST DISPLEASED, HE WAS IN A MURDEROUS FIT OF RAGE. HE QUICKLY DREW HIS KNIFE INTENT ON VENGEANCE.



FURIOUSLY HE THREW THE KNIFE AND ENDED THE MAN'S LIFE.



RASHID KNEW HE WOULD NOW BE AT HIS BROTHER'S MERCY, TO BE BANISHED FROM THE CAMP, OR EVEN EXECUTED FOR THIS MURDER.

BUT MAHMOUD DECIDED TO LET HIS BROTHER LIVE AND ORDERED HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, NEVER TO RETURN.



SO WHEN RASHID AND HIS SMALL BAND OF DEDICATED FOLLOWERS RODE OFF, KRUGER WENT WITH THEM. WATCHING THEM GO, MAHMOUD TURNED TO CAMPION—



MAHMOUD AND THE MAJOR RETURNED TO THEIR TENT, AND THEY FOUND THE STRONGMAN HAMISH HAD BEATEN SITTING GRAVE-FACED ON THE FLOOR, WAITING FOR THEM.



THEY LISTENED INTENTLY AS THE ARAB WENT ON—

HE PLANS TO HIDE IN GASHA PASS WITH HIS MEN, TO AMBUSH THE BRITISHERS.



GASHA PASS WAS A STEEP, ROCKY GORGE, OFFERING PLENTY COVER FOR WOULD-BE AMBUSHERS, AND CAMPION AND HIS MEN WOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL THROUGH THAT WAY.

THE MAJOR THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT, BEFORE MAKING A DECISION. AS HE LEFT HE TURNED TO THANK THE ARAB.

YOU'VE PROBABLY SAVED OUR LIVES, THANKS.

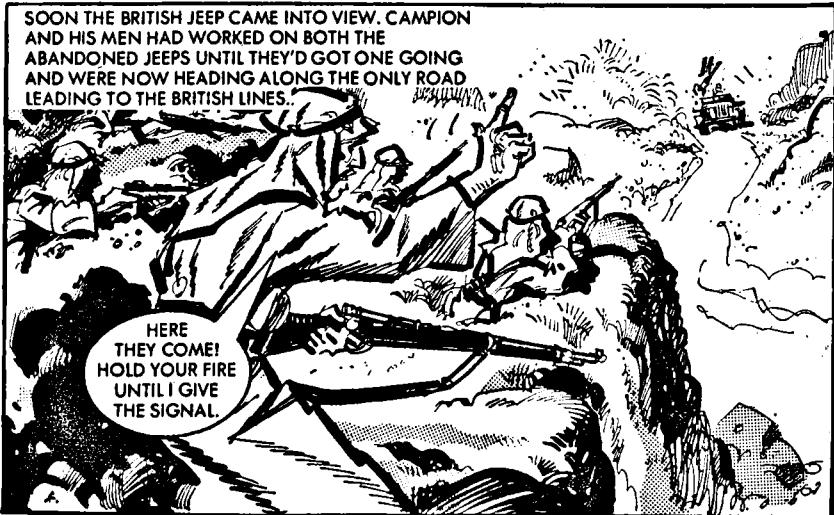
I HAVE REPAYED MY DEBT. ALLAH DECREES IT.



MEANWHILE IN GASHA PASS, THE BAND OF ARABS WERE IN POSITION FOR THE AMBUSH.
RASHID TURNED TO SPEAK TO KRUGER—



SOON THE BRITISH JEEP CAME INTO VIEW. CAMPION
AND HIS MEN HAD WORKED ON BOTH THE
ABANDONED JEPPS UNTIL THEY'D GOT ONE GOING
AND WERE NOW HEADING ALONG THE ONLY ROAD
LEADING TO THE BRITISH LINES.



BUT THAT SIGNAL NEVER CAME. HIGH IN THE ROCKS BEHIND THEM, MAHMUD'S MEN OPENED FIRE. CAMPION HAD PLANNED THIS BACK AT THE CAMP, AND NOW IT WAS WORKING PERFECTLY.



ONLY RASHID AND KRUGER HAD ESCAPED THE HAIL OF FIRE. THE EVIL ARAB WAS NOT FINISHED, HOWEVER, AND HE TOOK AIM AT THE JEEP BELOW.



... AND TAKING A MIGHTY SWING, HE KICKED RASHID OFF THE LEDGE TO HIS DEATH BELOW ON THE JAGGED ROCKS.

YOU DESERVE
THIS ...

NO ...
AAIEEEE!

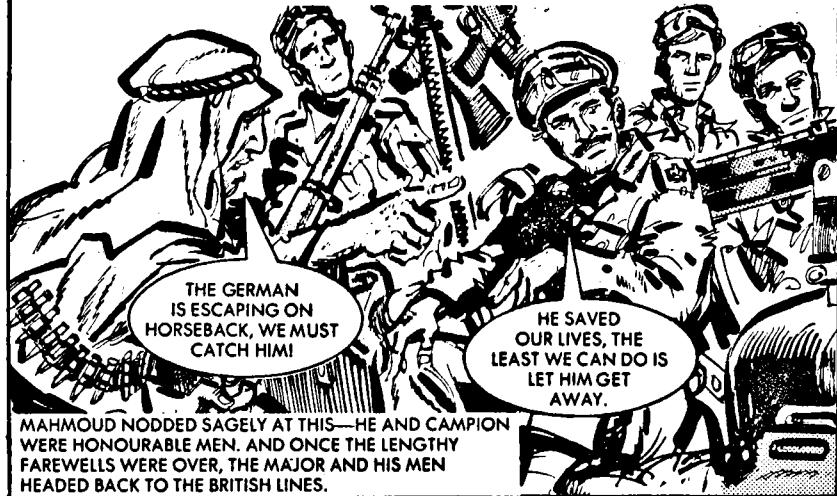
IN THE JEEP CAMPION SPOTTED RASHID'S FALLING BODY AND ORDERED A HALT. GABBY WAS ALL FOR SHOOTING THE LONE GERMAN BUT A CLIPPED COMMAND STOPPED HIM.

I'LL GET
'IM. CAN'T
MISS ...

NO,
LEAVE HIM! LET
HIM GO.

THE MAJOR KNEW THAT KRUGER HAD SAVED THEIR LIVES BY KILLING RASHID, SO HE WOULD LET THE GERMAN ESCAPE WITH HIS OWN LIFE IN RETURN.

ONE OF MAHMOUD'S MEN WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT KRUGER WAS GETTING AWAY, BUT CAMPION AND HIS MEN JUST SAT BACK AND WATCHED.



MAHMOUD NODDED SAGELY AT THIS—HE AND CAMPION WERE HONOURABLE MEN. AND ONCE THE LENGTHY FAREWELLS WERE OVER, THE MAJOR AND HIS MEN HEADED BACK TO THE BRITISH LINES.

WHEN THEY EVENTUALLY ARRIVED, CAMPION WENT OFF TO SEE THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND EXPLAIN ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED. BUT AS SOON AS THE MAJOR'S BACK WAS TURNED, A YOUNG, JUMPED-UP OFFICER CAME OVER WITH A SCOWL ON HIS FACE.



CAMPION APPROACHED THE YOUNG SECOND-LIEUTENANT AND PROCEEDED TO GIVE HIM THE SHARP END OF HIS TONGUE, MUCH TO THE AMUSEMENT OF GABBY, HAMISH AND WEEPY.



THE YOUNG MAN WALKED OFF, FEELING TWO INCHES TALL, WHILE THE MAJOR HAD A GOOD LAUGH WITH HIS MEN. FROM NOW ON THEY WERE INSEPARABLE, AND NOBODY—BUT NOBODY—WOULD EVER SAY A WORD AGAINST THEM.

Keep your eyes peeled for the next four action-packed Commando books. They're on sale in two weeks!—

"STOLEN SPITFIRE" "THE SURVIVOR"
"SPEARHEAD" "DEATH-RAY"

MYSTERY! DANGER! EXCITEMENT!

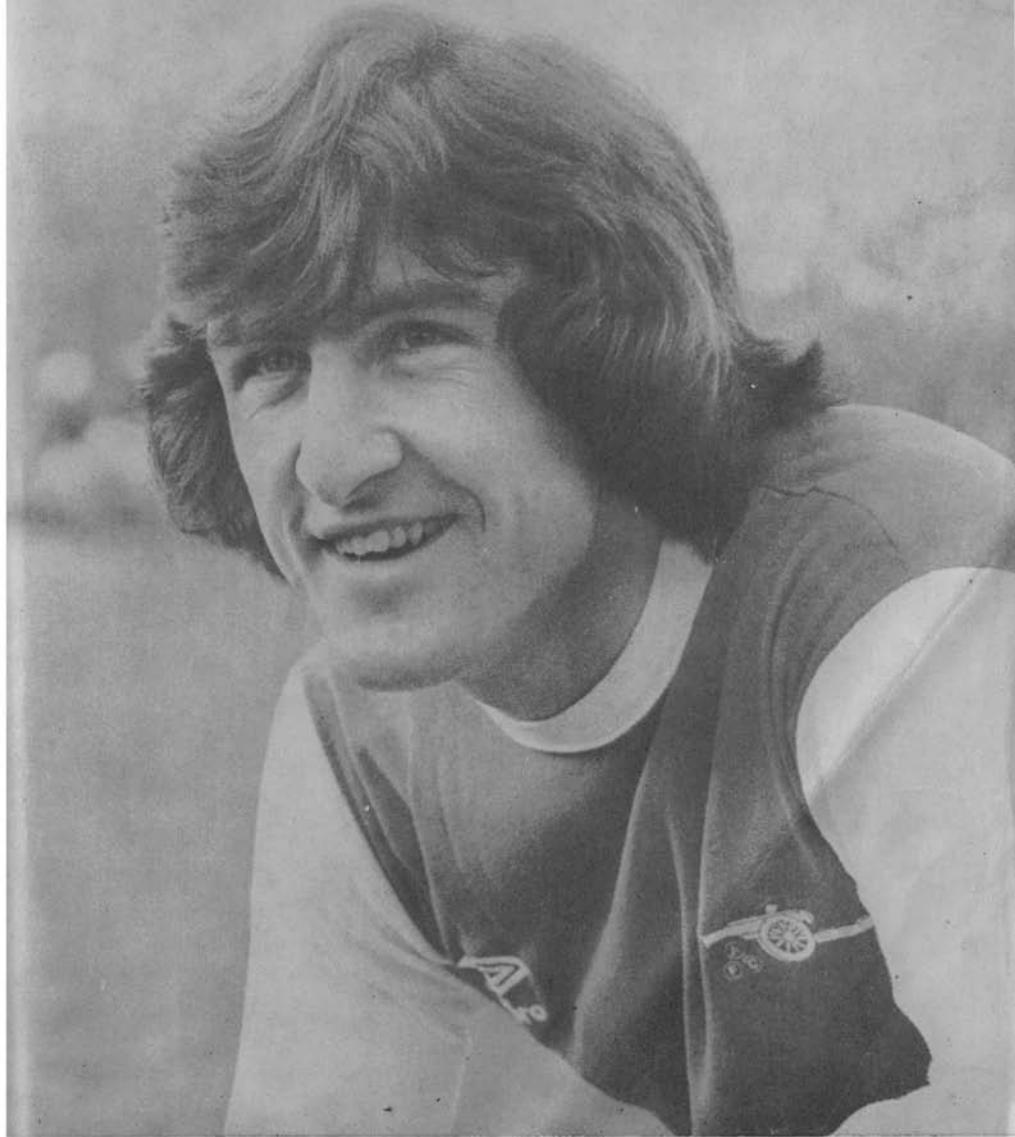


THAT'S WHAT YOU GET IN
THESE FOUR LATEST ACTION
* FILLED *
Commando
BOOKS!



THEY'RE OUT NOW - DON'T MISS 'EM!

Printed and Published in Great Britain by D. C. THOMSON & Co., Ltd., 185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS
© D. C. Thomson & Co., Ltd., 1979.



Stars of Soccer—Brian Talbot

The **CHAMPIONS**

THE scenes could have come straight out of some Wild West rodeo or mediaeval trial of strength . . . but for the group of Arab tribesmen watching silently.

They were waiting to find out who would be the winner of this contest — three British soldiers competing against three hand-picked Arabs.

Victory for the British would make them true champions. But defeat would see them pay with their lives . . .

 **Commando**

